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## Journal Identification

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## Journal Identification: The Time Is Now

by **Sandra K. Paul** (President, SKP Associates)

Look on the front cover of this journal. (Hey, y'all, "this journal" is ***Against the Grain***!) What do you see that's new, big, not-too-ugly, and finally a reality? THE SISAC SYMBOL!!!

On July 15, 1991, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Board of Standards Review approved the Serial Item and Contribution Identifier (SICI). As many of you know, Kluwer Academic Publishers has been printing the SISAC Symbol, a bar coded version of the serial item identifier in this Standard, on all of their journals for several years. B.H. Blackwell Periodicals Division, Elsevier Scientific Publishing, Pergamon Press (even before its acquisition by Elsevier) and John Wiley & Sons have all agreed that they will print the SISAC Symbol on ALL of their journals within six months of ANSI approval of the SCIC. As this article is written, in addition to ***Against the Grain*** the following publications carry the SISAC Symbol on their cover:

***Kidney International***  
(Springer-Verlag)

***Journal of Molecular Biology***  
(Academic Press)

***SCAN Newsletter***

***Scholarly Publishing***

***SISAC News***

and all publications issued by Faxon and EBSCO.

Approval of this Standard, which is officially ANSI/NISO Z39.56 (1991), marks the end of an almost 10 year effort begun in 1982 with the founding of the Serials Industry Systems Advisory Committee (SISAC), with its goal of helping the serials world reach consensus on a method for uniquely identifying serial issues in eye- and machine-readable form.

### ***The Serial Item & Contribution Identifier***

The issue-specific identifier in the SICI incorporates the identification information usually supplied by a publisher on a given issue, including ISSN, date of publication, volume, issue, part or whatever enumeration is printed on the periodical itself. The serial article (or other contribution) identifier is amazingly simple to create. It requires only the addition of the number of the first page of an article to the issue identifier in cases where only one article starts on a page. If more than one article starts on a page, a string of letters representing the first over-three-letter words in the article title follow the page number. All of this information is available in bibliographic references to journal articles.

### **The SISAC Symbol**

As many of the ***Against the Grain*** readers know, despite a 1986 test of the scanning of 56 journals of 22 different publishers, we have faced a chicken and egg situation until now. The test demonstrated the time savings and accuracy provided by bar code scanning. Publishers, systems vendors and librarians agreed that scanning will significantly reduce library claims and speed the shelving of journals for patron use. They also found that scanners could be programmed to scan BOTH the SISAC Symbol and the Universal Product Code which appears on the cover of popular trade magazines, increasing the number of scannable publications in many libraries. Despite that, before libraries were willing to give priority to their system vendors' developing the interface needed to bring scanned data into library check-in systems, they wanted to see more serials carrying bar codes. Publishers wanted to see more libraries with scanning equip-

ment and systems in place before they began printing the Symbol on their journals. Passage of the SICI as an ANSI Standard, and the early commitment of Elsevier, Pergamon and Wiley to print the Symbol when it was approved, has broken this cycle. System vendors whose systems are or will be, with the next version, capable of scanning the SISAC Symbol at serial check-in are:

Data Trek, Inc.  
Faxon's Microlinx  
INNOPAC/INNOVAQ  
NOTIS  
SIRSI  
Swets  
VTLS

The method of converting the SICI to Code 128 is explained in ***Serial Issue Identification: Code and Symbol Guidelines***. This publication is available for \$7.50 from the Book Industry Study Group. The Study Group also maintains a list of film master manufacturers who have confirmed their ability to convert serial identification information into the SISAC Symbol, publishers printing the Symbol on their journals and the library systems capable of scanning it.

AND, the VERY FIRST meeting of the SISAC Symbol User Group, which will be made up of current and potential users in the publishing, systems and library fields, will be held from 12:30 to 2 p.m. on FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1991, somewhere in Charleston. For more information, contact Katina or me at the Book Industry Study Group, 160 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10010, phone 212/929-1393, fax 212/989-7542. ***Against the Grain*** readers are also urged to call and ask for general information about these codes and Symbol or a subscription to the minutes of meetings and ***SISAC News***, both of which provide current information on use of these codes among all of the participants in serial communications network.